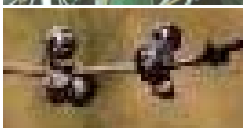
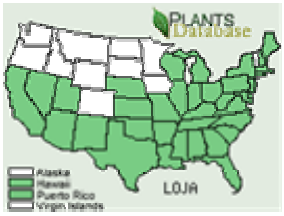
Japanese Honeysuckle *Lonicera japonica* Thunb



Native Origin: Japan and Korea; introduced to the U.S. in the early to mid-1800's as an ornamental plant, for erosion control, and wildlife

Description: Japanese honeysuckle, a member of the honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae), is a perennial vine that climbs by twisting its stems around vertical structures, including limbs and trunks of shrubs and small trees. The semi-evergreen to evergreen woody vine climbs and trails to 80 feet (24m) long, branching and often forming arbors in forest canopies. Leaves are opposite, oblong to oval, sometimes lobed, have short stalks, and occur in pairs along the stem. Flowers are tubular, with five fused petals, white to pink, turning yellow with age, very fragrant, and occur in pairs along the stem at leaf junctures (April to August). Stems and leaves are sometimes covered with fine, soft hairs. Small black fruits are produced in autumn, each containing 2-3 oval to oblong berry. The nearly spherical, green ripening to black, glossy berry is about 0.2 inch across on 0.4 to 1.2 inch stalks. It reproduces and spreads through vegetative (plant growth) and sexual (seed) means.

Habitat: It thrives in a wide variety of habitats including fields, forests, wetlands, barrens, and all types of disturbed lands. Occurs as dense infestations in forest margins, right-of-ways, and forest canopies. It is shade tolerant.



Distribution: Japanese honeysuckle occurs across the southern U.S. from California to New England and the Great Lakes region. Escaped populations also occur in Hawaii. Severe winter temperatures and low precipitation may limit its distribution in northern latitudes and in the West, respectively.

Ecological Impacts: It spreads and out-competes native plant species. Its evergreen to semi-evergreen nature gives it an added advantage over native species in many areas. Shrubs and young trees can be killed by girdling when vines twist tightly around stems and trunks, cutting off the flow of water through the plant. Dense growths of honeysuckle covering vegetation can gradually kill plants by blocking sunlight from reaching their leaves. Vigorous root competition helps it spread and displace neighboring native vegetation.

Control and Management:

Manual and mechanical- For small patches, hand-pull seedlings and young plants when the soil is moist, holding low on the stem to remove the whole plant along with its roots. Monitor frequently and remove any new plants. For large patches, repeated mowing combined with herbicide application is effective. Burning removes above ground vegetation but does not kill the underground rhizomes, which will continue to sprout.

Chemical- For effective control with herbicides, healthy green leaves must be present at application time and temperatures must be sufficient for plant activity. Several systemic herbicides (e.g., glyphosate and triclopyr) move through the plant to the roots when applied to the leaves or stems and have been effective on Japanese honeysuckle. Treatment in the fall, when many non-target plants are going dormant, is best. Repeat applications may be needed. Follow label guidelines.

Other: In certain situations, tethered goats have been used to remove honeysuckle growth, but must be monitored to prevent their escape to the wild where they would become an added ecological threat.

References: http://plants.usda.gov, www.nps.gov/plants/alien, Nonnative Invasive Plants of the Southern Forest, p. 38-39

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Invasive Plants website: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants